

Acton Historic District Commission
Meeting October 12, 2010
Minutes

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Meeting opened at 7:30 by Chair Kathy Acerbo-Bachman (KAB). ^{TOWN CLERK, ACTON} Also present were Ron Rose (RR), David Barrat (DB), David Honn (DH), Michaela Moran (MM), Terra Friedrichs (TF), Scott Kutil (SK) and Mike Gowing (MG) BoS Liaison.

There were no citizens' concerns.

Approval of Minutes of 9/29/10 meeting was deferred to October 26, 2010.

Application Spreadsheet: TF is working on Docushare; it needs fixing-send comments. Work at Red White and Brew. No application as yet for the sign. They were notified by e-mail. TF to shoot another email to RWB re sign and meeting reschedules. There will be a special meeting to be held on the 1st Monday in November to prioritize the town's CPC projects. MM and KAB will be there in support of the Asa Parlin Homestead at 17 Woodbury Lane. We need to find way to mark what projects are to be done. Steve Ledoux briefed BoS on internal CPC projects for prioritization.

Overview of projects. Letters of support to be written in support of Woodbury Lane, 18 Windsor Avenue Fire Station, Theater III, and Town Hall Windows. MM there should be one letter for all projects containing comments on each of projects.

7:45: One person to be assigned to write a letter on each project and to describe what is state of application.

MM Referring to Woodbury Lane is working with Kim Connor-Hughes of Acton Historic Commission. KC-H had to show up to BoS meeting with proposal for Woodbury Lane. We HDC and HC will present the project as Plan A and Plan B.

HC is charged with finding a use for the property. This is not the responsibility of HDC. The main goal is to protect building from demolition. BoS must understand this. Bill Dickerson (BD) and MM are working to make presentation to CPC soon.

Scott is still injured. TF will do his undone minutes.

DB will finish project to marginally reference properties in the three historic districts. Project assignments-by KAB sheet hand drawn reference.

We need to write a letter to CPC listing all projects and why they're worthwhile. RR will try to do this?

Dean will return to discuss 18 Windsor Ave. fire station and the replacement side entry door at the West Acton Fire station.

Lighting warrant and signage warrant; Planning said "Open" signs are allowed in Business districts. We need to consider a change to our bylaws to conform "Open" signs. Neon signs are not allowed in historic districts.

KAB: MHC 106 Review. MHC is incensed that our letter to MBTA has had no response. Ed Bell's letter was (EB) heeded. EB was appalled. The MBTA thinks they (MBTA) are doing a wonderful job. MHC will do whatever they can to help us with our train station issues.

8:00 Acton Women's Club: Five members of AWC appeared, Ellie Halsey, Lori Megdal, Carolyn, Kilpatrick, Anita Rogers and Kim Ahern, landscape architect. The plan calls for a 5% graded sloped walkway to best address most concerns for need of a handicapped accessible ramp to the entrance of their building. The plan saves a dogwood tree. There will also be a set of stairs from the elevated way, brick courtyard and bench pushed to the far side of walkway. Kim Ahern, is a local landscape architect. The plan will keep the layout as simple as possible. There will be no new planting, the grading stays the same. They will use brick around the planting. Referred to Rude Favretti Landscapes for gardens that would be appropriate for the age of the building. Retaining walls will use granite similar to the foundation granite. Railings will be less than 30" for comfort and will be based on an 1810-style simple iron railing. Any granite displaced will be reused elsewhere.

TF loves the design. Too much railing along the walkway. Is railing needed?

MM The design is great; it adds lots to the building. AWC will have to apply to the Architectural Access Board for a variance.

DH Will rewrite a letter in support of the plan. There is no masonry. Use composite material flush with brick at the entranceway for decking material. Maybe have a cocoa mat for a softer look. Don't notice entrance.

SK Composite material is more slippery than wood. Could mix sand in with it. Front door to corner 1/4" ascends against retaining wall. A slight pitch at the door. Bench at top. Railing goes behind bench. Nothing to hold on to.

Anita agrees with comments about railing. Railing is noticeable. Doesn't think there is a need for railing at the end of the run. They will put a bench with a back up there.

MM Depending on where the lot lines are AWC may need to get permission to run a walkway over town common area.

RR Wonderful development. Place of public appearance. Suggested decrease use of railing and use of honorific materials near entrance in page 9.

KAB agreed with rail design and changes. 11/15 is the deadline for application to CPC. Accepts materials change on page 9.

TF Moved to approve the application with the following changes: Garden more abstract; linear walls of granite; shifting granite slabs per list; end block eliminate railing; include a bench; railing only on one side; put steps between window and tree; hardwood entrance; square section of stone.

No vote on this tonight.

KAB There is no need for approval of application before getting approval from CPC. They don't need an approved application from us but rather a letter of support from the HDC.

8:40: Dean Charter for 18 Windsor and 256 Central Street. West Acton Fire Station-Dean wants to put in an aluminum door at 256 Central Street.

MM said that she remembered that we had decided that aluminum was acceptable.

DH agreed that aluminum is acceptable but paint the door.

DC Referring to the Cultural Residential List. The firehouse is not seen as part of cultural residential list.

MM Refer to the inventory form in the survey for the district.

SK We have allowed exceptions to non-contributory buildings.

KAB would favor aluminum.

DB Aluminum is ok like so many other buildings, stores and businesses in West Acton.

RR The firehouse is a contributing building with typical 1950's architecture. The West Acton post office. is similar. Aluminum is fine with similar chamfered detailing. Get triple track off the upper windows with its slim white style and bring back original character.

KAB Specific building features painted a dark color so that building doors are a prominent feature. It can work on upper windows.

DC I submitted a plan to renovate all three fire stations with an estimated cost of \$4 million. Windows that are more energy efficient, more appropriate would be installed. However redoing windows is not imminent.

TF The metal profile is acceptable. Need to vote on 10/26/10.

DC Extension: Aluminum vs. wood. Aluminum acceptable. Nothing will be done until spring.

DC gave an extension for Central and Main Street windows. Will shoot an email in writing for Central Street.

18 Windsor Avenue is a contributing building. Application will be filed tomorrow concerning a fire exit door under the outside stairway. The vote will be on installing a side door; the old door can't be reused. The vote will be pending abutters' notices.

Move to approve door. Just under the fire escape. We need to know the height of door to be installed and we need to know height of landing above the door. Must use wood. The landing framework will be boxed out. In the same location of 2-3 windows. The door will be made by Reep Millwork Company or similar. RR seconded.

MM Regarding the hardware, the doorknob will be an exterior lever-type doorknob dark bronze color. DC We don't have to have an exterior doorknob because the door will only be opened from the inside. Unanimously approved.

DC said he would like a letter for the project for the BoS 11/1 meeting. He will bring in two more applications for windows in town hall. The other project is a large window-128 panes- in the old wing of the library that needs to be restored.

9:05: Theatre III. Another CPC project. Present were Rich Jrossman (RJ) and Gwen Erskine (GE), architect for T-III. What is the project? RJ said that they need a plan to rehab and maintain the building for the future. It will be a phased-in in project and the plan is to raise money for early phases. The first renderings were presented.

The plan is collaborative and conceptual. The drawings and rude map are sufficient to elicit feedback. Theatre III individuals had previously met with DH.

KAB Only the exterior changes are within our jurisdiction.

T-III Many of the drawings are for internal work and not within our jurisdiction.

GE ADA access is an issue requiring us to re-landscape the front of building

SK The current landscaping detracts from building.

T-III wants to eliminate steps and allow free access options up to the left and down to left. The elevator is to be replaced. The restrooms need ADA compliance. They will correct this. There is an issue with the chairs left of the stage. Roof over rear egress needs work. They want to add 2nd floor to furnace room.

KAB Wants comments from the commission members.

T-III Major landscaping changes move chairs to rear of building and put windows at the rear. Move the bulkhead to the rear. We want to remove three windows on the side. They are not historic.

MM Look at building inventory to verify the windows are not historic.

T-III Happy to see windows go.

MM Would like to see bulkhead removed. Re-grading vs. re-energizing is great. The roof in question is not part of the main roof. Removal of the windows would be acceptable.

T-III All materials used would be compliant with preservation guidelines.
RR Minimum sized elevator dimension minimal Window blocked off not approved Better pedestrian entrances Shift elevator window on angle do a lot for façade entry: 60'-70's curved walk. Prefers more formal space vs. curved.

DH Benefit from more flat areas have outdoor intermission area not hemmed in-could terrace out front no ramping. Don't want to remove vestibule

T-III no authority existed at forming of district.

KAB agrees. Can entrance be wide enough for cars and handicapped? Rise would be 1/12 with handrail on 1/20 without handrail.

SK Comfortable with car pull-up

DH Street solution and ID space

RR design drop off parking on opposite side need additional curb cut.

TF Elevator moved a little

Next steps Meet with DH and come back CPC proposed next month. This is enough information available to frame for bi. Phase exterior come back with CPC on board.

KAB if you have enough, we can vote.

TF MM not comfortable with this. Write letter of support contributions to West Acton so CPC knows working in alignment. Give endorsement.

MM Get monies from CPC secure envelope all is replacement in kind all out of jurisdiction.

TF Move letter in support of proposed replacement in kind. Stamped and approval not needed.

SK is this enough? For T-III?

T-III would like to show whole project. Count on CPC. Letter is sufficient to show working with HDC.

Letter in process. Working together. Don't need HDC to attend CPC meeting to say yes we're all on same page.

TF will take six

Thanks to T-III for their efforts to preserve the condition and character of the building. We will write a letter to CPC and include it in the packet. There should be separate letters from the liaison for each project. This is not a municipal project. Does BoS w/letters from internal. Library 18 windows do we prioritize municipal projects?

SK Strongly in favor of Woodbury Lane.


RR Where there's a choice between losing a building vs. windows we should focus attention on Woodbury Lane. Will HC have any proposal ready in time for the BoS meeting?

MM HC said they should be ready to. We are presenting a joint HC-HDC proposal to the BoS and CPC. It is not necessary to have a CPC application ready yet. The selectmen wanted to hear what the argument is for preserving Woodbury Lane. We need a BoS agenda from Steve LeDoux (SL) for the November 1st meeting. SL wants to connect HC, HDC and DC. Saving Woodbury Lane is way on top of the priority list.

MM will contact Kimberly and Dean Charter.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05PM

Respectfully


David T. Barrat
Secretary.